

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8528

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 3746

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BPAK, PFOR, NL, US

SUBJ: LOCKHEED AND THE PRINCE: AN UPDATE

1. SUMMARY: LEST OUR READERS FORGET, THE PRINCE OF THE NETHERLANDS REMAINS UNDER A CLOUD, ACCUSED OF ACCEPTING \$1.1 MILLION IN BRIBES FROM LOCKHEED. THE SPECIAL COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE ALLEGATIONS CONTINUES TO GO QUIETLY ABOUT ITS WORK AND THE AFFAIR HAS PRACTICALLY DISAPPEARED AS A MATTER FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION. IT COULD BREAK INTO THE NEWS AT ANY MOMENT THOUGH, AND THIS CABLE ATTEMPTS TO FURNISH AN UPDATE. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE THE THREE MAN SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY (DONNER COMMISSION) WAS ESTABLISHED LAST FEBRUARY, IT HAS QUIETLY GONE ABOUT ITS BUSINESS. FROM THE BEGINNING, THE COMMISSION ADOPTED A POLICY OF NO COMMENT REGARDING ITS INVESTIGATION. SAVE FOR AN OCCASIONAL ANNOUNCEMENT THAT COMMISSION MEMBERS HAD TRAVELED TO THE UNITED STATES OR SWITZERLAND, THE ONLY INDICATION OF HOW THE INVESTIGATION WAS PROCEEDING CAME IN EARLY JUNE WHEN THE COMMISSION "SPOKESMAN" SAID THAT THERE

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WOULD BE NOT REPORT BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH. HE HASN'T

BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE.

3. IN THE MEANTIME, THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT HAS RECESSED FOR THE SUMMER, INDIVIDUAL DUTCH CABINET MEMBERS ARE IN THE PROCESS OF LEAVING ON THEIR VACATIONS (DURING LATE JULY AND EARLY AUGUST ALL BUT FOUR OF THEM WILL BE ABROAD OR ON HOLIDAY IN THE NETHERLANDS LEAVING REINS OF GOVERNMENT IN HANDS OF MINISTER OF HEALTH VORRINK AS ACTING PRIME MINISTER). AND THE PRINCE CELEBRATED HIS 65TH BIRTHDAY. EXCEPT FOR A SMALL FAMILY PARTY AT SOESTDIJK PALACE AND THE USUAL DISPLAY OF FLAGS ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PRIVATE RESIDENCES, HIS BIRTHDAY PASSED WITHOUT NOTICE, WHICH IS REMARKABLE ONLY BECAUSE MANY PEOPLE HERE HAD SPECULATED THAT BERNHARD MIGHT DECIDE TO TAKE THE OCCASION TO ANNOUNCE HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE POSITION OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE ARMED FORCES. HE DID NOT. EARLY ON IN THE INVESTIGATION THE PRINCE SEEMED TO BE AVOIDING THE LIMELIGHT, BUT OF LATE EVEN THAT SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED AND HE HAS BEEN PERFORMING PUBLIC FUNCTIONS. IN THE COMPANY OF THE QUEEN, HE ATTENDED THE EMBASSYS COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATION ON JULY 4.

4. AT THE MOMENT, THE PRINCE'S DIFFICULTIES HAVE BEEN PRACTICALLY FORGOTTEN BY THE DUTCH PRESS, AND WE SUSPECT BY MUCH OF THE DUTCH PUBLIC AS WELL, A CIRCUMSTANCE WHICH DISPLEASES NO ONE, LEAST OF ALL THE GON. A JOURNALIST WITH FAIRLY CLOSE TIES TO PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL HAS TOLD US THAT DEN UYL AND OTHERS ON THE CABINET WICH THE AFFAIR WOULD JUST GO AWAY. THEY KNOW THAT IT WILL NOT, INDEED CANNOT, BUT ARE JUST AS HAPPY TO HAVE IT IGNORED AND FOR THE DAY OF RECKONING (THE ISSUANCE OF THE DONNER COMMISSIONS REPORT) TO BE POSTPONED FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE WHO HAS TALKED TO DEN UYL ABOUT THE CASE AND AT ONE POINT WAS ASKED TO BRIEF HIM ABOUT THE HISTORY AND CONSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF ABDICATION IN THE NETHERLANDS, THE PRIME MINISTER PROFESSES TO KNOW NO MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE ABOUT WHAT THE DONNER COMMISSION HAS DISCOVERED OR MAY REPORT. WE ARE TOLD THAT, EXCEPT FOR BEING KEPT INFORMED ON TRAVEL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS, THEIR RECEIPT OR NONRECEIPT OF NEEDED DOCUMENTS, AND WHOM THEY ARE INTERVIEWING, DEN UYL HAS NO INSIDE INFORMATION. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CABINET ARE EVEN LESS WELL INFORMED, BOTH CONFIDENTIAL

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BECAUSE THE COMMISSION IS SO SECRETIVE AND BECAUSE MOST OF THEM SEEM TO WANT TO AVOID KNOWING TOO MUCH ABOUT THE AFFAIR.

5. AT THIS POINT IT IS ANYONES GUESS WHAT THE COMMISSION WILL FINALLY DECIDE OR EVEN WHEN IT WILL MAKE ITS REPORT. RECENT GUESSES ON TIMING HAVE CENTERED ON SOME TIME IN AUGUST, GIVEN COMPLEXITY OF CASE AND SUMMER SLOWDOWN DUE TO VACATIONS OF COMMISSION STAFF. THERE ARE OF COURSE

ARGUMENTS FOR DELAYING A BAD REPORT EVEN LONGER SINCE THE QUEEN IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT WITH THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE ON SEPTEMBER 21. A REPORT CLEARING THE PRINCE FULLY COULD BE ISSUED AT ANY TIME, THE SOONER THE BETTER. BUT IT IS ALL A GUESSING GAME AND IS LIKELY TO REMAIN SO GIVEN THE LACK OF LEAKS FROM THE COMMISSION.
BROWN

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